

Message Text

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65

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 DODE-00

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O R 131250Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4955

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

USEC BRUSSELS

US MISSION GENEVA 844

US MISSION NATO 810

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: ASTURIAS MINERS STRIKE ENDS WITH SIGNIFICANT SECRET

BALLOT

1. DURING RECENT STRIKE WAVE ONE OF MOST PERSISTENT STRIKES HAS
BEEN THAT OF 13,000 ASTRURIAS MINERS AT GOVT OWNED HUMOSA
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COMPANY, WHICH HAS LASTED TWO MONTHS NOW. THE STRIKE, OVER

WAGES, SLOWLY SPREAD, AND BECAME MORE EMBITTERRED. STRIKERS
WERE ASSISTED SOME WHAT BY FINANCIAL AID FROM INTERNATIONAL
SOURCES, INCLUDING MINERS INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIAT
IN LONDON, FRENCH CGT, AND ALSO REPORTEDLY EAST EUROPEAN UNIONS
(IRONICALLY AT THE SAME TIME, POLISH GOVT IS ALLEGED TO HAVE
BEEN SELLING POLISH COAL TO ALLEVIATE SPANISH COAL SUPPLY PROBLEMS
POSED BY STRIKE). VIRTUALLY ALL CLANDESTINE LABOR GROUPS HAVE
BEEN INVOLVED, INCLUDING SOCIALIST UGT, CATHOLIC USO, DOMINANT
PCE ELEMENT IN SPANISH WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC), AND MORE
EXTREMIST GROUPS SUCH AS "CATHOLIC" ORT, "MAOIST" MCE, AND
TROTSKYITE LCR.

2. THEN THE ASTURIAS GOVERNOR CONVOKED A REFERENDUM,
APARENTLY

THE FIRST OF THIS TYPE SINCE CIVIL WAR, AMONG STRIKING MINERS
WHICH WAS CONDUCTED BY SECRET BALLOT ON MARCH 12, SOME 8.000
MINERS (65 PER CENT OF STRIKING WORKERS) VOTED OF WHICH AN OVER
WHELMING 96 PER CENT VOTED TO RETURN TO WORK. HUNOSA HAS NOW
ANNOUNCED IT WILL REOPEN ITS MINES ON MARCH 15, TALKS ARE TO
CONTINUE ON THE WAGE ISSUE.

3. ELSEWHERE THERE IS STILL A SUBSTANIAL AMOUNT OF STRIKE
ACTIVITY. THE STRIKE AND LABOR PROBLEMS IN VITORIA, IN AFTERMATH
OF MARCH 3 GENERAL STRIKE, REMAIN UNRESOLVED, AND THERE REMAINS
SUBSTANTIAL LABOR RELATED STRIKE ACTIVITY IN REST OF BASQUE
PROVINCES, IN GALICIA, IN ZARAGOZA, AND IN BARCELONA.

4. COMMENT THE ASTURIAS STRIKE VOTE, WHICH LARGEY CIRCUMVENTS
EXISTING LEGISLATION AND THE GOVT CONTROLLED SSO STRUCTURES
COULD SERVE AS A USEFUL MODEL FOR OTHER DISPUTES. IT STRIKES
AT THE MANIPULATED WORKER ASSEMBLIES WHERE VOTES ON WHETHER
OR NOT TO RETURN TO WORK ARE TAKEN BY ACCLAMATION OR A SHOW
OF HANDS, UNDER THE PRESSURE OF RINGLEADERS, WHO USUALLY BELONG
TO PCE OR OTHER MORE EXTREMIST GROUPS. CREDIT FOR ENDING
ASTURIAS STRIKE WITH
SECRET BALLOT WOULD APPEAR TO LARGEY GO TO BOTH LOCAL
GOVERNOR AND LIBERAL NOEL ZAPICO, PRESIDENT OF SSO'S MINERS
SYNDICATE AND NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF SSO'S NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF WORKERS. OTHER FACTORS WHICH HELPED BRING ABOUT THIS HIGHLY
SIGNIFICANT VOTE WERE GENERAL WEARINESS AND INCREASING ECONOMIC
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HARDSHIP AMONG THE MINERS AND MODERATE ATTITUDE OF PCE LEADERSHIP
IN THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS, WHO IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN
URGING WORKERS TO RETURN TO THEIR JOBS (BOTH IN ASTURIAS
AND IN STRIKES IN OTHER PARTS OF SPAIN.)

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